

citizens has not gone unnoticed. Thank you for your service to our great State, and may God bless you and Tina as you enter this new chapter of your life.

IT IS TIME TO RE-EDUCATE WASHINGTON

Ms. FOXX. Madam Speaker, Washington needs to be re-educated on the meaning of "shall not be infringed."

The Second Amendment insulates the American people from the Federal Government exerting undue influence over them; otherwise known as infringement.

When the Federal Government acts in haste, the room for error is drastically compounded; as is the case with the Democrat gun control bills that are before this very body.

Let me be very clear: The horrific tragedies that occurred in Uvalde and Buffalo are truly heartbreaking. I continue to pray for our society and for the families of the men, women, and children who were senselessly murdered.

Before proposals are put on the table, however, this problem must be diagnosed in its entirety.

The Supreme Court has recognized the right of individual citizens to keep and bear arms under the Second Amendment.

Further, the Court specifically recognizes that the inherent right to self-defense is protected by the Second Amendment as well.

A study conducted in 2013 estimated that firearms are used in defense from half a million to 3 million times annually. Americans exercise their Second Amendment rights when protecting their family and property. It was not written so that one could go hunting.

As former Senator Tom Coburn once said, "It was to create a force to balance a tyrannical force here."

The Federal Government should not be in the business of issuing edicts that threaten the Second Amendment rights of Americans. It is a right that cannot be infringed.

GUN CONTROL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from the Virgin Islands (Ms. PLASKETT) for 5 minutes.

Ms. PLASKETT. Madam Speaker, I have shared before that my father was for many decades a New York City police officer. He had to carry a firearm to protect himself and others, but was acutely aware of individuals on the street, often with guns illegally, who could harm him and those he was tasked to protect.

I do not oppose the right of American citizens to own guns, or intend to rob any constitutional rights. But, we all know that money, hatred, and power have used the Constitution to cover themselves from showing the real intent that they have, the love of greed, desire for power, ignorance, racism, hatred. That is what many are using that constitutional protection to cover themselves from.

Over 50 percent of gun violence is attributable to people who use handguns to commit suicide. The remainder of those deaths and injuries are largely homicide and murder, such as widespread street crime. Then there are mass killings, which have been on an uptick in recent years.

On May 24, in Texas, an 18-year old boy acted as a lone gunman in the second deadliest school shooting on record. Armed with a semiautomatic rifle and 375 rounds of ammunition, he entered Robb Elementary School, opened fire, and laid waste to 19 children and two teachers. The pervasiveness and regularity of such occurrences in the United States has reached epidemic levels.

In 2020, 45,222 Americans died of gun-related injuries, more than any other year on record. That is a 14 percent increase since 2019; a 25 percent increase since 2015; and a 43 percent increase since 2010. In this year alone, almost 19,000 people have already lost their lives; a number, evidenced by the events of the past couple of weeks, are only on the rise.

This weekend alone, over a dozen mass shootings took place: Buffalo, Texas, Philadelphia, South Carolina, Kentucky, Tennessee, Oklahoma, so many more. These mass killings are just the tip of the iceberg with respect to gun violence carnage in America.

Firearms are the leading cause of death for children and teens in this Nation. How many more children will be sacrificed before action is taken? How many more schools will we allow to become battlefields and burial grounds for the sake of the cloak that many are using the Constitution for.

The time for action is now. We know that our gun violence epidemic can be substantially curtailed with thoughtful, reasonable commonsense gun legislation. This includes raising the age, as we have done for so many things, for automatic purchases to 21, and developing and implementing more comprehensive background checks to prevent situations like the Buffalo shooting and the Uvalde massacre.

We need to strengthen gun laws for gun trafficking, which is devastating our country. Areas with strong gun laws cannot curtail the influx of illegal guns trafficked in from States with few restrictions. Places like New York City and Chicago cannot curtail the illegal weapons coming from other places.

With higher unemployment rates, places like my home, the Virgin Islands, has the second highest rate of guns smuggled across its borders and a homicide rate nine times higher than the 50 States.

As well as better establishing and regulating gun storage to prevent minors from acquiring deadly weapons, it is necessary for Members on both sides of this debate to come together to protect the lives of our citizens.

Throw off the cloak that you are using, calling our Constitution to hover and hide what you are really protecting: money, power, hatred.

□ 1030

RECOGNIZING STEVE MEINHAUSEN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. CLOUD) for 5 minutes.

Mr. CLOUD. Madam Speaker, today, I rise to recognize an extraordinary friend and great servant of the Texas 27th Congressional District, Steve Meinhausen.

Steve came to Texas in 2004 with his wife, Carrie, and four children: Matthew, Makenna, Kacey, and Ellie. Steve and his family brought selfless hearts and an entrepreneurial spirit to our part of south Texas.

Steve opened many businesses during his time, the most famous being Stevie Lew's BBQ. In 2017, when Hurricane Harvey hit Rockport, among his many generous community endeavors, Steve graciously opened his restaurant to feed over 12,000 meals to volunteers and others in need.

Steve has built for his family a legacy of generosity, a sincere love of God, and a strong work ethic. I thank Steve for all he has done for the many people he has blessed in the Rockport-Fulton area. He is truly a servant of God and an exemplary citizen.

It is my honor to recognize Steve for his outstanding service and dedication to family, to community, and to our Nation.

ENDING GUN VIOLENCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Minnesota (Ms. OMAR) for 5 minutes.

Ms. OMAR. Madam Speaker, it has been 23 years since Columbine. It has been 15 years since Virginia Tech, 10 years since Sandy Hook, 4 years since Parkland. We have offered prayer and thoughts for years with no real action.

It has been 15 days since the school shooting in Uvalde, Texas, where 19 children were massacred. One of the students, a 10-year-old girl, survived because she covered herself in the blood of her dead classmate.

We have trained kids to hide under their tables. We have trained teachers to barricade their doors. We have trained schools to lock down their campuses. Now, are we going to train kids to cover themselves with their friend's blood in order to survive?

When are we going to understand the common denominator here is not just criminals but making it easy for criminals to access deadly weapons?

Australia, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, and Canada all dealt with mass shootings, but there was a national outcry, and they put in place restrictions to stop mass carnage from happening again.

We don't have mental health issues more than any other country. What we do have here are politicians who lack the moral courage to stand up to the NRA. We have a society that is not willing to stand up to protect its citizens, especially its most vulnerable,